

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 14270 031634Z

43/11

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3440

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL ASMARA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 14270

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (EO,TAGS,SUBJ OMMITTED)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, ET, US

SUBJECT: KAGNEW FOUR: ITALIAN INTERVENTION

REF: A) STATE 235068; B) STATE 235635

1. MFA (SECCEN MANZINI) INFORMED US THIS MORNING THAT
ELF POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE BEEN ASSURED BY OPERATIONAL
GROUPS HOLDING KAGNEW FOUR IN ERITREA THAT HOSTAGES
WILL NOT BE HARMED. ONLY ELF CHIEF IDENTIFIED
SPECIFICALLY TO US SO FAR IS OSMAN SALEH SABBE.

2. ACTING ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE, GOI REPS HAVE OFFERED
TO SUPPLY MEDICINES TO ELF(QUANTITIES OR EXACT RECIPIENTS NOT
SPECIFIED). GOI DOES NOT EXPECT COMPENSATION FROM US.

3. UNNAMED ELF LEADER WILL CONSULT FURTHER WITH GOI
IN ROME ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9. MANZINI SAID THAT ALTHOUGH
GOI RECOGNIZES USG POLICY OF REFUSAL TO NEGOTIATE WITH TERR-
ORISTS, HE WOULD APPRECIATE PROMPT RECEIPT OF
WHATEVER GUIDANCE, ARGUMENTATION, VIEWS OR ADVICE
USG MIGHT CARE TO ARM HIM WITH. HE WONDERED IF, FOR
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PAGE 02 ROME 14270 031634Z

EXAMPLE, SOME USG OFFER OF MEDICINES WOULD FALL WITHIN

OUR GUIDELINES.

4. OFFICE DIRECTOR RACHELE TOLD EMBOFF OCTOBER 2 THAT GOI REPS WERE USING WIDE RANGE OF ARGUMENTATION ON ELF, MOST OF IT BEARING ON ADVERSE PSYCHO-POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF AN EXECUTION, ALONG LINES REFTEL (B). HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, CITE MENTION TO ELF OF POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS ON ITALIAN HUMANITARIAN AID.

5. RACHELE SAID THERE WAS A "CLEAR POLITICAL WILLINGNESS" ON PART OF ELF POLITICAL LEVEL TO "AT LEAST POSTPONE THE DAT", AND FELT THAT WE CAN BE "A LITTLE OPTIMISTIC" IF THE POLITICAL PEOPLE CAN RETAIN CONTROL OF THEIR MILITARY. HE ALLUDED TO POSSIBILITY THAT UNITS HOLDING THE TWO US PAIRS MAY BE ON THE MOVE IN ERITREA TO JOIN FORCES IN A MORE SECURE AREA WHERE THEY WILL BE UNDER MORE FIRM CONTROL OF THE "GENERAL COMMAND".

6. MANZINI STRESSED TO AMBASSADOR VOLPE THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF KEEPING UNDER COVER USG/GOI LINK IN THIS OPERATION. FOR THAT REASON WE LEAVE IT TO DEPARTMENT TO MAKE SUCH FURTHER DISTRIBUTION OF THIS MESSAGE AS IT DEEMS ADVISABLE.VOLPE

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Message Attributes

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